

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
COMMITTEE- MARCH 3, 2009 – ROOM 2A

SB 978 – An Act Concerning Occupational Licensing for Certain State Employees

Presented by: Hubert J. Barnes, Business Manager, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 777

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the committee, my name is Hubert J. Barnes, and I am the Business Manager of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local #777 which covers the whole state of Connecticut with 3,500 members.

I'm here today to ask for support for the substitute language in Senate Bill 978, which requires the installation of piping mains and branch lines in manufacturing facilities be done by properly licensed tradespersons.

As the Labor Co-Chairman of Local 777 JATC committee we are committed to produce the most highly qualified Plumbers and Pipefitters for our Industry. Our apprentice program requires 25% more hours of on the job training and 40% more hours of classroom related instructions then the state requirement, so at the end of the fulfillment of the obligation that the apprentices has undertaken they are ready to become journeypersons to perform Mechanical Piping Installations.

Our Local has just completed the new \$6,500,000 (six million five hundred thousand dollar) training center in Meriden, CT. I may add that at no cost to the state, strictly paid for by the membership and our contractors. Also the cost of the training of the apprentice is paid for by the membership and the contractors.

Each and every year new laws and regulations are instituted in the trades. In order to keep up with them you must have special training. We are committed to keep our potable water systems safe, we are committed to keep the work place a safe environment, and most of all assure that the customer receives the quality of an installation that they paid for.

If a potable water system is not properly protected there is a chance that a whole community can be affected.

If a boiler or the related piping is not properly installed it could create a time bomb in the work place. Right now a person has to be properly licensed to install a low pressure boiler in a school, but a high pressure boiler used for process piping and the installation of the high pressure steam piping or high temperature water systems does not have to be licensed in the work place, I ask you does this make sense?

Process piping is not just related to Potable Water systems, Steam and Hot Water systems there are also gasses, high pressure air systems, chill water systems and piping conveying hazardous

materials, chemicals and others materials used in the production of products. There are also the installations of the proper material for the particular system, the placement of the right fittings and valves and the proper installation of the hanger system.

Our members are professional piping and mechanical systems installers. We do not build bridges, we do not wire electrical systems and we do not hand out prescription drugs. We are professional pipefitters who know how to install piping systems better than any other trade or person that thinks they are doing it right. Many times our members point out to engineers the mistakes that they made in designing a system, such as a carpenter or and electrician or other properly trained person might do to ensure the job is done right. We do install a lot of process piping systems but more and more systems are being installed by untrained or unlicensed installers now because it has been noticed that an installer does not have to be licensed.

One last item I would like to bring to your attention. In the Governor's budget there is a line item to double the license fees of the occupational trades. I do not have a problem with the fee increase, but to enable unlicensed installers to perform work which I believe should be done by a properly licensed installer is wrong for all the reasons I stated previously.

I want to thank the committee for their time and would be willing to answer any questions. I can also be reached at my office at (877) 777-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hubert J. Barnes".

Hubert J. Barnes

Business Manager Local #777